

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 H-02 SSO-00 PA-01

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D/HA/PW:FASIEVERTS

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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

JCRC NAS BARBERS POINT

CINCPAC HONO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180867

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, VS

SUBJECT: AMCITS IN VIETNAM

REFS: 1) BANGKOK 20538 (NOTAL); 2) BANGKOK 20539 (NOTAL);
GENEVA 5780 (NOTAL)

1. VIETNAMESE EMBASSY IN PARIS TODAY CABLED HOUSE SELECT
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY AND SENATORS MCGOVERN AND
KENNEDY THAT AMERICANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS IN VIETNAM
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WILL BE ALLOWED TO DEPART ABOUT AUGUST 1. CHAIRMAN

MONTGOMERY (AND PRESUMABLY THE TWO SENATORS) ARE MAKING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT PUBLIC.

2. CABLE DOES NOT SPECIFY WHETHER ALL AMERICANS AND DEPENDENTS OF AMERICANS IN VIETNAM WILL BE INCLUDED IN THIS FLIGHT, ALTHOUGH INDICATIONS ARE IT WILL BE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER, POSSIBLY AS HIGH AS 50 (INCLUDING DEPENDENTS).

3. PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR USE HERE IS AS FOLLOWS:

QUESTION: SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE SAID THAT VIETNAM WILL RELEASE THE AMERICANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WHO ARE IN SAIGON ON AUGUST 1. DOES THE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY REACTION TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT?

ANSWER: AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE LONG SOUGHT THE RELEASE OF THOSE AMERICANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WHO ARE IN SAIGON AND WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY WELCOME THAT MOVE. WE HOPE THAT ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO LEAVE WILL BE PERMITTED TO DO SO.

QUESTION: DO YOU INTERPRET THIS AS BEING A GESTURE OF GOODWILL ON THE PART OF THE VIETNAMESE PERHAPS LEADING TO A START OF THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS?

ANSWER: I WOULDN'T WANT TO SPECULATE ON WHAT THIS MIGHT MEAN.

QUESTION: IN THE PAST, YOU HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CARRYING ON A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES AND CONTACTS WITH THE VIETNAMESE. DOES THIS ANNOUNCEMENT REFLECT THOSE CONTACTS?

ANSWER: I'M NOT AWARE THAT IT DOES.

QUESTION: IF NOT, HOW HAS THE USG SOUGHT THE RELEASE OF THESE AMERICANS?

ANSWER: WE HAVE HAD ACTIVE AND CONTINUING CONTACTS ON THE WELFARE AND RELEASE OF THOSE AMERICANS WITH VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHERS.
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QUESTION: DID YOU HAVE ANY ADVANCE WORD OF THIS?

ANSWER: NO. NOT DIRECTLY.

QUESTION: HOW MANY AMERICANS ARE IN SAIGON?

ANSWER: WE ARE NOT SURE JUST HOW MANY WILL BE COMING

OUT.THERE ARE ABOUT 30-40 AMERICANS PLUS A NUMBER OF
DEPENDENTS IN SAIGON. SOME OF THE LATTER MAY ALSO BE
AMERICAN CITIZENS.

QUESTION: WHO ARE THEY? ANY USG OFFICIALS?

ANSWER: IT'S HARD TO GENERALIZE. THEY ARE A GROUP OF
AMERICANS WHO DID NOT LEAVE BEFORE SAIGON WAS OVERRUN IN
APRIL OF LAST YEAR. THEY ARE ALL PRIVATE CITIZENS.
NO OFFICIALS ARE INVOLVED.

QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU STAND ON HUMANITARIAN AID TO
VIETNAM? SOME TIME AGO YOU SAID THAT THE USG HAD APPROVED
THE SENDING OF CERTAIN HUMANITARIAN AID ITEMS TO VIETNAM.

ANSWER: SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON THERE HAVE BEEN ABOUT

\$3 MILLION OF LICENSE APPROVED. THESE HAVE INVOLVED
MOSTLY FOOD, CLOTHING AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN ITEMS.
ROBINSON

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